

2016
A
FUNERAL DISCOURSE

ON THE

MUCH-LAMENTED DEATH

OF

MRS. ELIZABETH PHILLIPS,

WIFE OF MR. EDWARD PHILLIPS,

PREACHED IN THE BAPTIST MEETING-HOUSE,

AT MELKSHAM, WILTS, MAY 3, 1799.

BY

THOMAS PARSONS.

WITH

AN ADDRESS,

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT,

BY

THOMAS WARD,

PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION.

BULGIN, TYP.

1799.

GENERAL DISCOURSE

ON THE

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OF

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WIFE OF MR. EDWARD PHILLIPS

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PASTOR OF THE CONGREGATION

LONDON: T. B. RUCKEN, 17, ST. MARK'S LANE.

Funeral Discourse, &c.

1 THESSALONIANS, c. iv. v. 13.

BUT I WOULD NOT HAVE YOU TO BE IGNORANT,
BRETHREN, CONCERNING THEM WHICH ARE ASLEEP,
THAT YE SORROW NOT, EVEN AS OTHERS WHICH
HAVE NO HOPE.

OUR obligations to infinite Love are never felt to so much advantage, as in the day of adversity. The Child of Calamity, involved in mental darkness, sees the light of Heaven breaking in upon his wretched abode; and whilst it dissipates his horrors, and soothes his wounded spirit, he has the most convincing evidence that his comforts are wisely proportioned, and sweetly appropriate to the degree of his anguish. Whether we advert to the depravity or the misery of man, the gospel comes announcing pardon, or communicating consolation; always preserving and exemplifying its genuine character; "giving unto them that mourn in Zion, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garments of praise for the spirit of heaviness."

We are assembled, my brethren, on an occasion afflicting and solemn; our object is to mourn with and to comfort our sorrowing brother, and his weeping connexions. It is a period of distress, but not of despon-

dency; we are cast down, but not in despair. Let us blend our griefs with those of our Friends, whom the hand of God hath touched: let us weep with them that weep, and attempt at least, to soothe their sorrows, whilst with kindred feelings we indulge our own. The kind heart loves the softening influence of sympathetic grief, and willingly sharing the woes of others, exerts every effort to alleviate their pain, by suggesting consolatory arguments and motives to meek submission. Nor need we hesitate—the Gospel opens all its stores, exhibiting in every form the compassion of a God, and encouraging us to extract from the declarations of immutable truth, and the promises of inviolable love, “everlasting consolation, and a good hope through grace.”

In perfect harmony with the divine intention and character, is the warm solicitude of the Apostle, “I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.”

That the sorrow of a Christian is justifiable, and that divine information, and the hope it inspires, are the surest preservatives against its excess, are the propositions our text supplies.

A slight view of the constitution of man, and the various relations in which he stands, will convince us that we are susceptible of passions; and that by the duties of our stations, and the diversified events of our existence, the exercise of them becomes, not merely important, but indispensable. Dependant upon the care and attention of others, man is trained up to maturity, and from early

infancy learns to imbibe those sensibilities, which are to form a constant stimulation to action, give existence to virtue, and constitute the embellishment of his nature. The springs of mental exertion are to be found in those modes of mind, denominated the passions. The exploits of heroism, the discoveries of bold adventure, the researches of philosophy, the productions of genius, are to be traced up to some strong impetus of Soul, some controlling passion, as their origin: and it is to the energy of strong impassioned intellect, we are indebted for those improvements in society which confer dignity, excellence, and amiableness, on our species. Placed in a state of reciprocal obligation, man is the subject of kind attachment: mutual love is the source of our sweetest enjoyments, and also the occasion of our severest grief: that which in the pursuit or possession, attracts the heart, and obtains its affection, will, in its extinction, pierce us through with many sorrows. What we love, we shall be solicitous to preserve; what we are solicitous to preserve, we relinquish with keen regret. We justify sorrow because it is natural to and inherent in man. "He is born to trouble as the sparks fly upward," "he is of few days and full of trouble," and the original denunciation upon fallen man is confirmed by the universality of the fact, "cursed is the ground for thy sake, in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life."

But sorrow is laudable as well as natural: HE, who is the infallible judge of intellectual excellence, reprehends the cold-hearted spectators of contiguous misery, "the righteous perisheth, and no man layeth it to heart." And high in the catalogue of crimes stands a guilty indif-

ference to the distresses of others. "Ye lie upon beds of ivory, ye eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves out of the midst of the stall, ye chant to the sound of the viol, and invent to yourselves instruments of music, like David, ye drink wine in bowls, and anoint yourselves with the chiefest ointments, but ye are not grieved for the affliction of Joseph." Such a culpable insensibility is sweetly contrasted by the gentle spirit which pure and undefiled religion inspires, when it enjoins us to "visit the widows and the fatherless in their affliction, to mourn with them that mourn, to bear each others burdens, and to be pitiful and kindly-affectioned one towards another,"—when it preserves, in records that can never die, the memorial of human sorrow in all its amiable varieties, social, filial, and conjugal,—and when it combines all the dignity and loveliness of woe, in a character the most interesting to guilty and miserable mortals. We have often accompanied the hoary Patriarch in his lamentations over the lifeless remains of his beloved Sarah; the duteous and tender-hearted Joseph, when he fell on his father's neck, and wept over him and kissed him; the grateful Tribes deploring the loss of their Deliverer and their Guide; the weeping Prophet, venting his incurable grief over the desolated City and Temple of his God,—we have been frequently melted at the grave of Lazarus, at the burial of Stephen, and at the parting scene between the Apostle and his beloved Ephesian converts, "they all wept sore, and fell on Paul's neck and kissed him, sorrowing most of all for the words which he spake, that they should see his face no more." But every instance of generous feelings and sacred sympathy, is thrown into obscurity, when we behold God manifest

in the flesh, assuming and realizing the predicted character, "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." With every ability to heal the diseased and relieve the wretched, he took our infirmities and bare our sicknesses; and whilst about to prove himself the resurrection and the life, he groaned and wept at the grave of a deceased friend. Why should we repress the bursting sigh, or conceal the starting tear? With such an example of condescending grief and divine compassion, we will not check the emotions of distress; nor wish to exchange even the painful feelings of the heart, for an unmeaning and impracticable apathy.

Our sorrow is sanctioned by its utility: thousands have appropriated to themselves the experience of the Psalmist, "before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now have I learned to keep thy righteous precepts:" and have confirmed the aphorisms of the wise man, "Sorrow is better than laughter, for by the sadness of the countenance, the heart is made better." "It is better to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting, for that is the end of all men, and the living will lay it to heart." God knows our frame, and how best to recover the sinner from the error of his ways; "I will go and return unto my place, until they acknowledge their offence; in their affliction they will seek me early." "Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth, and correcteth every son whom he receiveth." "Cleanse your hands, ye sinners, and purify your hearts, ye double-minded; be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning, and your joy to heaviness. Humble yourselves in the sight of God, and he shall

"lift you up." Sorrow depresses the lofty spirit; and, rousing the heart from its dangerous repose, prepares it for salutary conviction. "Then they cry unto the Lord, "in their trouble, and he delivereth them out of their "distresses." Thus are sanctified sorrows the prelude to deliverance, and deliverance is succeeded by joy and praise. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be "comforted." The favorites of God, the heirs of Heaven, are, like the Captain of their Salvation, destined to be perfected through sufferings; and individual experience illustrates and confirms the fact. Many of you, my brethren, have known the advantages of affliction. When gratified with health, with amiable connexions and unclouded prosperity, you were thoughtless and vain; you forgot God, your Maker, and lightly esteemed the Rock of your Salvation; you were enslaved to sensible enjoyment, regardless of your best interest, and only solicitous to multiply and prolong your deceptive happiness; Infinite Mercy beheld your danger, and to save you from irretrievable ruin, deprived you of your dearest joys: the greater your imaginary security, the more were you exposed to the shafts of adversity, and you received a wound in a part peculiarly tender, and as you fondly hoped, least vulnerable. The stroke was painful but friendly; you lost indeed the dear object of your partial, and perhaps excessive, love; you were plunged at once into misery; the world presented nothing to console you; your reflections on the past added to the poignancy of your grief; your contemplations on the present aggravated your calamity; and your prospects of the future dreadfully confirmed your despondency. In this state of dejection and wretchedness, you were disposed to solemn

thought and serious recollection ; you remembered your folly, your ingratitude, your immoderate attachment to perishable objects, and your criminal forgetfulness of God. Humbled and softened by adversity, you were open to conviction, contrition succeeded, and the conscience, tremblingly alive to the remembrance of sin, and pained with the dread of terrible retribution, was prepared for that period to which sorrow was designed, from its commencement, to conduct you ; when, in answer to the fervor of penitential confession, and the unceasing importunity of prayer, you heard the soft, the gentle accents of Love ; “ I have seen thy tears, I have heard thy prayers, “ I will heal thy backslidings, I will love thee freely. I “ have surely heard Ephraim bemoaning himself under “ chastisement, lamenting his perverseness, and deploring “ the sins of his youth : yet is he a dear son, a pleasant “ child ; for since I spake against him, I do earnestly re- “ member him still, therefore my bowels are troubled “ for him ; I will surely have mercy upon him, saith the “ Lord.” Thus were you led, with some variety of circumstances, by wise and kind gradations, from Marah to Elim, from a state of dark despondency, to a state of mental tranquillity, hope, and confidence ; you have felt the advantages of sanctified sorrow, you are now grateful for past seasons of distress, and will readily adopt the devout acknowledgment, “ It was good for me that I was “ afflicted.”

But whilst we admit the sorrow of the good man to be justifiable, let us not attempt its indiscriminate vindication : it may be excessive.

When adversity visits the heart unaccustomed to discipline, and never softened down to meek humility, it may inflame and irritate the ungovernable spirit, and the contending passions may, by their opposing fury, raise a dreadful storm within. The miserable sufferer, impatient of controul, justifies by the magnitude of his loss, the madness of his grief, and even the propriety of those reproaches which, in the paroxysms of disappointment or chagrin, he casts on the conduct of Providence. The unhappy creature, ignorant of the character and moral government of God, ignorant of the propriety and the utility of affliction, and ignorant of his own destiny, thinks the misery he endures a sufficient apology for insulting his Maker, and for terrifying to distraction all around him. Father of Mercies ! soften the inflexible, unyielding spirit, nor suffer the refractory creature to persist in rejecting thy yoke, and ratifying his own destruction !

But the Christian may indulge his grief until it becomes excessive also, and the excess of his sorrow arises from ignorance too. A forgetfulness of truth long known and admitted, will, at the moment when it is most to be dreaded, be productive of the same unhappy effect as actual ignorance. The good man may, under the overwhelming waves of trouble, lose sight of his brighter prospects, and contract all his attention to the immediate occasion of his dejection ; and, in proportion to the degree and continuance of his abstraction from better subjects, will be the measure and duration of his misery. Yet the case is not desperate ; the immortal principle, though for a moment suppressed, will recover its activity, and impel him to a train of thought more consonant to his judg-

ment, his duty, and his comfort. He will recur to those sources of consolation which have often refreshed him; he will chide his thoughtlessness, blame himself for cleaving to the dust, and letting his God, his Savior, go; and exclaim, "why art thou cast down, O my soul, and "why art thou disquieted within me? hope thou in "God, for I shall yet praise him; he is the health of my "countenance, and my God."

Excessive sorrow dreadfully discomposes the mind, indicates a temper reluctant to paternal chastisement, and little benefited by past instruction; renders our connexions unhappy, unfits us for discharging the duties of life, and awfully forebodes a succession of sorrowful events: and is, in every point of view, discordant from the genuine spirit of religion, inconsistent with our profession, discouraging to others, and dishonorable to God. "But I would not have you to be ignorant, Brethren, "concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, "even as others which have no hope,"

Divine information, and the hope it inspires, are the surest preservatives against excessive sorrow.

Man is naturally ignorant; by education and information he acquires knowledge; and, placed in a sphere of observation and activity, he may increase and improve his intellectual store: divine information originates in Heaven, and from the communications of infinite Wisdom, we obtain the knowledge of God, of ourselves, and of a future state. "What man knoweth the things of a "man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so "the things of God knoweth no man, but the spirit of

“God.” The argument is clear and conclusive: it was impossible for the mind of man to penetrate the thoughts and purposes of God; he must have communicated his will to us, or we must have remained in invincible ignorance. And this he has done; he hath given to us “the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began, but now is made manifest; and, by the scriptures of the prophets, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, made known to all nations, for the obedience of faith.”

That branch of divine knowledge, to which our text refers, and to which the present solemnity calls our attention, is, *the resurrection of the dead*. This is the doctrine which is to excite our hope, which is to allay the rage of grief, and which sheds a heavenly lustre over the sad receptacles of death. O, while gazing around us, we behold one vast extended scene of misery and desolation; and whilst Nature, to every anxious inquiry, is silent and incommunicable as the grave, how reviving, how welcome, the gracious intelligence! Nature tells us that man is mortal, God assures he is immortal: universal fact demonstrates that all are doomed to die; Revelation informs us that all shall be made alive; and that, “as by man came death, so also by man came the resurrection of the dead.” “The hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves, shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth.” Thus we obtain satisfaction on a point infinitely interesting, and which, whilst it instructs us to suspend our judgment of doubtful events, until the day of righteous decision arrives, teaches us to moderate our anxieties, and restrain our sorrows, “for they that sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.”

The existence of departed spirits in a separate state, is a doctrine frequently alluded to in the New Testament; and it is a source of consoling reflection, when we lose the society of our much-loved friends on earth, that, however wretched we may be, they are happy. But the doctrine of a separate state is very distinguishable from that of the resurrection.

At death, the body dies, and the spirit returns to God, who gave it. The soul dies not, the body does; and the term Resurrection, or rising again, can only apply to that part of us which is mortal. In this sense, and in this sense only, except when it is used figuratively, is the term applied by the inspired writers. "Thy brother shall rise again." "I know that he shall rise again, at the resurrection, at the last day." Such forms of expression can relate only to the perishable part of man, which, as the Apostle says, is "sown a natural body:" and its future revival is the object of the believer's earnest expectation, "waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of the body." Considering that the body, with its senses, and appropriate organization, is the medium of communication between external objects and the mind; that the intellect derives all the information it obtains through its instrumentality; that the mental character seems to be dependant on the state of the body, yea, that the exercise of its powers is promoted or suspended by the circumstances of its frail companion; that in the pains and the pleasures of life they are constant sharers; and that in the gratification of virtuous or vicious dispositions they mutually assist and participate: considering these facts, it will appear to be perfectly reasonable

and equitable, that they should, in conjunction, be advanced to immortality.*

The resurrection of the dead constituted an important article in that Gospel which the Apostles diffused through the world: "The Priests and the Sadducees were grieved
" because they taught the people, and preached, through

*Any reference to the subject, in an argumentative form, was deemed improper on such an occasion: it may not, however, be inadmissible, in a Note, to observe, that the two principal objections to the reality of a Resurrection, are, 1st. That the component parts of a human body may have entered into the composition of several human bodies in succession; and those parts, being equally claimed by a number of other bodies, would render the revival of the very same individual bodies, impossible. To which it is replied, that the fact is assumed and incapable of demonstration, and the conclusion, of course, questionable; and that corporeal identity may, from the changes which the human frame incessantly passes through, rather consist in the sameness of the organization, than in the sameness of the particles so organized. And 2dly. That the degraded character of the body, and the offices to which several of its parts are assigned, are totally inconsistent with every idea we are taught to form of a future state of perfection. But the perfection of the body has relation to that state in which it exists, the perfection of an infant being distinguishable from that of an adult: and it is said to infer, that as the human frame is capable of degrees in perfection, it is capable of attaining the highest. Those parts which are now necessary, and which, in a superior state, will be unnecessary, will certainly be omitted, and yet the ideas of human perfection and individuality be preserved. The instance of Moses on the mount illustrates two points, that the human body, admitted into a near intercourse with Deity, may subsist without gross aliment, and also acquire such a degree of splendor, as to distress our present powers of vision. And this instance, together with that of the transfiguration, will assist us to extend our ideas of that purity and refinement, of which, in their ultimate state of perfection, material bodies are susceptible. To a believer, the resurrection of the body of Christ, and its ascension to glory, will terminate the question satisfactorily and decisively.

"Jesus, the resurrection of the dead." The inquisitive speculatists of Athens were curious to be informed of a doctrine so new and so wonderful, for "Paul preached unto them Jesus and the resurrection;" and before Felix he declared his hope to be, "that there shall be a resurrection of the dead, both of the just and unjust." Yea, so essential is this doctrine, that the Apostle asserts, "if there be no resurrection, then is Christ not risen," and "if the dead rise not, then is Christ not raised." The whole truth of the Gospel is thus connected with, and suspended upon, the infallible certainty of the resurrection. "But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept;" and this event was designed to be the grand and confirming evidence of the doctrine: for the whole Gospel is comprised in that condensed epitome delivered to the Corinthians, "how that Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the Scriptures." The fact then, as unequivocally stated by the Son of God, and his inspired delegates, is, *that the dead shall arise*: and this is the interesting truth which is referred to in our text, as the object, the proper and peculiar object of our hope, respecting those who sleep in Jesus, lest our sorrow should become excessive.

This lively hope we owe to him, who was a partaker "of flesh and blood, that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil." Jesus, the Prince of Life, the Almighty Redeemer, has undertaken the cause of depraved and degraded humanity,

permitting the temporary ravages of man's mortal foe, till Time shall have accomplished its destination; when the vast plan, which infinite sagacity devised, and which Omnipotence effects, shall be disclosed. Then shall the great enemies of God and Man be extirpated, the sleeping millions that throng the habitations of the dead, shall be reclaimed, and then shall be verified that saying, "death shall be swallowed up in victory." Meanwhile, the condescending Savior bids us rely on his solemn engagement, "I will ransom them from the power of the Grave, I will redeem them from Death;" and confirms our faith in the glorious expectation, by an event which is both the proof and pledge of its certainty, his own resurrection.

Divine instruction constitutes Christian knowledge; and this knowledge, as indicated by our subject, enables us to form clearer views of futurity, and to explain, in some degree at least, those events which without that information, are totally inexplicable; and is wisely calculated to alleviate those distressing anxieties which the frequent intrusions of death occasion: for we are not qualified merely for receiving knowledge, but are encouraged to form that knowledge into a principle of action, that it may become the ground of our confidence and the basis of our hope. Thus we acquire a lively interest in the gracious communication, we enjoy its cheering radiance as we prosecute our journey to a better world, are supported by its kind assurances in every season of affliction, and feel its animating energy even when passing through the valley of the shadow of death. And thus when we are discharging the last sad office to a de-

ceased Friend, and yielding to the tender emotions of congenial regret, we are directed to a subject full of immortality, in order to correct immoderate grief by combining with it a hope all divine. Hope and sorrow are often associates in the same breast, and frequently form a Christian's best companions.

Futurity opens an immense prospect to the astonished mind, a prospect too luminous for our enfeebled sight, too vast for our limited comprehension; supremely glorious but indistinct, "we see but in part, we know but in part: yet the beaming splendor attracts us, and gives fresh energy to expectation and desire: through the obscuring veil of mortality, we see the King in his beauty and behold the land afar off. Here we lament the debility of our mental powers, the impurity and intemperance of our passions, the instability of our faith, and the languor of our love: in that blissful world we anticipate the attainment of intellectual perfection, the extinction of every unhallowed affection, and a felicity complete and everlasting. Here we are often depressed by pecuniary difficulties, by incessant and sometimes unavailing toil; there we shall hunger and thirst no more, "for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed us, "and lead us unto living fountains of water, and God "shall wipe away all tears from our eyes." Here our friendships are frequently interrupted, and together with the dearest connexions of life, are entombed in the silent grave; there on Sion's holy mount shall all the redeemed of the Lord assemble, with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads, and sorrow and sighing for ever flee

away. In this frail state of weakness, want, and pain, we are subject to the helplessness of infancy, the progress of disease, the rankling wound, the decrepitude of age, and groan being burthened; in that refined state of existence, we expect our vile bodies to be made like unto the glorious body of the Son of God, this corruptible to put on incorruption, and this mortal to put on immortality.

A Hope fertile in such prospects, and with penetrating eye exploring eternity, is happily calculated to mitigate sorrow, and render it, not merely tolerable, but instructive and elevating. See the good man bending and weeping over the relics of his blasted joys! That lovely assemblage of mortal beauty, which so lately charmed his heart, and was once animated by a mind benignant, mild, and affectionate, reduced by disease, is now the prey of death. Ah, disturb not his grief. He is recollecting her excellencies, he is calling up the shades of his departed felicities, and giving an imaginary existence to the thousand endearments that composed his happiness, to be realized alas! no more. She was the friend of his bosom, the joy of his heart,—they had taken sweet counsel together, walked to the house of God in company, and her piety had often quickened his devotion, and contributed to cheer his path;—but her eyes are closed in death, and he exclaims in the bitterness of his spirit, what have I more! He sees around him the dear pledges of wedded love, by every expression of juvenile grief, testifying their apprehensions of a loss, they know not how to estimate; that sight aggravates his affliction and multiplies his anxieties. To such a mourner, how welcome is Hope! He is confident of her safety

whose absence he deplores, and he has a blessed expectation that he shall hereafter, see her arrayed in immortal beauty, enjoy her society, and renew their suspended amities, in a state exempt from pain, from sorrow, and from death. He believes and hopes, the excess of his anguish abates, and he gradually attains a holy calm, a submissive, solemn, dignified melancholy, which whilst it softens and humbles, raises and refines his soul. O the infinite kindness of God our Saviour! How gracious thus to blend with the sharpest sufferings, the sweetest consolations, and when the waves of trouble threaten to overwhelm us, to place beneath us his everlasting arms, and in the consoling language of promise to assure us, "when thou passest through the waters I will be with thee, and through the floods, they shall not overflow thee." Such an application shews us the beauty and propriety of the admonition, "sorrow not even as others which have no hope."

Our text suggests an awful implication, some may die, and their survivors mourn, without hope! How dreadful the conflict, when the King of Terrors arrests the reluctant criminal; his conscience racked with tormenting recollection, mercy rejected, pardon unsolicited, a Saviour contemned, and by contempt transformed into an angry Judge, a yawning grave, a worm that never dies! The spectators of his deplorable exit look on with stupid amazement, suffer a momentary interruption in their career, but soon recover their wonted insensibility, and glide down the polluted stream of life without God, and without hope in the world! From such a scene, so incongruous to our

present feelings, let us turn our eyes. The righteous hath hope in death. Death, that terminates the fleeting delights of the gay and the dissipated; Death, that extinguishes the fallacious pretensions of the hypocrite, accosts the righteous with a friendly respect, and, whilst executing its commission, puts a final period to his sufferings. He has fought the good fight, he has finished his course, he has kept the faith, and is more than a conqueror through Him that loved him.

How frequently are we called to witness these humiliating proofs of frail mortality! The death of a Neighbour, a Friend, a Relation, is a summons to the living; and reminds us that we must soon evacuate our temporary abodes, and retire to the grave. "Prepare to meet thy God," is the message death delivers, and a compliance with the awful injunction should be the habitual employment of immortal beings; beings now in a state of probation, but ere long to enjoy the felicities of Heaven, or to suffer the horrors of final perdition.

Let us conclude by specifying the benefits derivable from our subject. Observe first the importance of religious knowledge. God himself condescends to become your instructor, and the information he communicates must be infinitely interesting to ignorant man. His condescension demands the warm gratitude of the heart, but it requires also a promptitude to learn, a thirst for divine knowledge, and intense application to the study of truth. The more you understand, the more pleasurable will your researches be, for it is a shining light, that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Your Teacher is infi-

nitely wise and kind; the doctrine he inculcates is as infallible as it is important; and he adjusts the events that befall you so as best to illustrate the propriety of his instructions. The application of divine knowledge to the various and successive circumstances of your lives, constitutes wisdom. Providence subjects you to perpetual vicissitude, and places you in situations of diversified trial, where every gracious principle will be exercised, and by exercise become permanent and vigorous. Scriptural information is the theory, and your respective stations are assigned you for the purpose of exhibiting that theory in practice. Mere knowledge is unavailing, but the union of what we know with what we feel, the application of truth believed to the occurrences which engage and interest our attention, shews us the harmony of the divine government, and administers the surest support and consolation whilst in this vale of tears. Are you in prosperity? reflect on the dangers to which it exposes you, and apply to your hearts the appropriate admonition, "be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy." If infinite love sweetens your comforts, you will enjoy them richly indeed! Are your poor? To you the Gospel speaks with peculiar emphasis, revealing to your longing eyes the unsearchable riches of Christ, insuring to you all that is really necessary here, and encouraging you to hope for an incorruptible inheritance hereafter. Thus are you taught contentment in your humble lot, and enabled to endure as seeing him that is invisible, having respect to the recompence of reward. Are you indulged with health and vigor? Forget not the salutary cautions.

addressed to you; "let not the strong man glory in his strength," "It is appointed unto you also to die." And remember that though you boast in the enjoyment of youth, beauty, and firmness of constitution, your possession is insecure and momentary, "for what is your life?" "It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." Are you in bitterness of spirit, ruminating on blessings once enjoyed, but now for ever extinct, and lamenting the unexpected loss of your dearest connexions? In the moment when they are most essential, reject not the consolations of your God, abandon not your better judgment, but hold fast your confidence firm unto the end. Blessings are pronounced upon the mourners, they shall be comforted, "the days of their mourning shall be ended." Infinite compassion will dry your tears, put off your sackcloth, and gird you with gladness. Let it then be your constant occupation to apply to existing circumstances, that portion of divine instruction with which you are favored,

Secondly, learn to estimate the value of a good hope through grace; a hope gracious in its origin, consolatory in its effect, and glorious in its consummation. Its application to individual misery is unlimited; its energy, undiminished by enjoyment, will accumulate by exertion; its soothing, its tranquilizing influence is peculiarly desirable and peculiarly efficacious, when every present comfort dies; without it you are wretched even in prosperity, with it you are happy even in adversity. It throws the attractions of earth into the shade of indifference, but opens to your view in immense perspective, an infinity of

perfection, an eternity of happiness. It calms the spirit when agitated by storms without or the tumult of disorderly passions within; it produces quiet submission and meek acquiescence, when under the correcting rod; it stimulates to duty, administers strength in weakness, and light in darkness; it is our guide and companion through life, and our only stay and support in the convulsive struggles of expiring nature: nor will it relinquish its charge, nor desist from its friendly office, till death be swallowed up in victory, and complete possession succeed to expectation and desire. Lastly, endeavor to regulate your affections, and to guard against inordinate grief, by reverting to the source, the efficacy, and the object of your hope. Your minds, enlightened by the word of truth, will be convinced of the folly and impiety of concentrating that love in the creature, which belongs supremely to God; that your confidence in the fading joys of time is misplaced; that your regrets when in a state of deprivation, too often imply a will unsubdued, a spirit untractable, a disproportionate attachment to the world, and a shameful indifference to the things that are above; and that all your sorrows unconnected with a purifying hope, are but the efforts of rebellious passions, to resist the righteousness, the wisdom, and the kindness of God, in the exercise of his authority over you.

In the experience of sufferings, we are liable to be affected too little, as well as too much. In which case affliction is useless, its moral efficacy is frustrated, and the obvious design of correction rendered abortive. To derive improvement from adversity it is necessary that we

feel it; an unfeeling heart is not the property of a christian; to remove the heart of stone, and to substitute a heart of flesh, is the blessing promised, and grace performs it: we cannot regulate those emotions of which we are not susceptible. But the members of Christ are partakers of his spirit, and they follow him in drinking of the bitter cup which their heavenly Father gives them. Like him they feel their own sorrows, like him they participate in the distresses of others; and like him they are instructed and it is their aim, though with conscious imperfection, to yield implicit submission to the will of God, to be absolutely resigned to his disposal, to check their grief when it dares to arraign his conduct, and to repress every murmuring thought. "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good," is the prevailing sentiment of the humble, the sorrowing, the submissive soul.

But the union of Hope and suffering, not only produces resignation, its benevolent efficacy inspires confidence and joy: such is the happy result of sanctified affliction and well-adjusted sorrow, that it is probable the most exquisite pleasures the christian experiences, are enjoyed in seasons of affliction: and there have been, and still are, instances of persons thus indulged, who dreaded the termination of their sorrows, lest it should prove the termination of their joys. At such moments, faith becomes strong, the world recedes from our view, and the soul feels herself on the confines of Heaven.

And such a saint I knew, such a happy combination of long-continued affliction, habitual resignation, and placid

expectation, had a real, a living existence, in the experience of our Friend, our Sister, whose obsequies we now attend.

Piety, friendship, and benevolence, were the characteristics of the deceased. Many of you knew her intimately, many more remotely, and most of you either from personal acquaintance or satisfactory information, will willingly confirm the concise eulogium. From her infancy I was favored with the friendship of her parents, whose virtues and attachments were imbibed and preserved by their only, their amiable child. Educated under the eye of her affectionate parents, she caught their spirit, and devoted their liberal indulgence to the exercise and the gratification of one strong and unremitting propensity, to promote the happiness of others.

Her religion was the religion of the heart, and consisted in an habitual intercourse with her God, from which neither the attractions of youth and fortune, nor the anxious cares of wedded life, could divert her. Her conduct demonstrated the reality and energy of a divine principle, always alive and active in its influence on her mind.

Her piety was unassuming, candid, and lovely; void of affectation, and retiring from publicity; favorable to the opinions of others, and even to their actions, when capable of a generous interpretation; and so remote from censure and harsh severity, as to excite the love and the

emulation of those around her. There is reason to believe, that many young females were allured by the amiable form in which religion shone through her temper and behaviour, who would have turned with disgust from the ungracious and forbidding aspect which, in some instances, it unhappily wears. But she adorned the doctrine of God her Saviour, and by her lip and her life, recommended the holy Gospel she professed.

Her friendship was discriminate, but cordial, generous, and steady. It was attachment founded on native sweetness and tenderness of heart, corroborated and sanctioned by her religious principle, and cherished by an unconquerable disposition to diffuse happiness. She formed those friendships here, which she hoped to renew and perpetuate in another world. The purity of her mind, the delicacy of her conscience, prescribed the limits of her unreserved and confidential attachments, but she was kind and obliging, and liberal to a widely-extended circle. I never knew an individual so affectionately solicitous to secure and promote the comfort and the prosperity of her Friends; nor did she think her exertions sufficient, whilst any thing remained to be done to advance their felicity.

Her benevolence was a principle planted so early in her bosom, as to have all the appearance of an inherent virtue; there, it grew as she grew, and strengthened with her strength, gradually extending its branches and producing the fruits of righteousness, for the relief and refreshment of all who solicited, or of whose wants she was apprized. This is not the unmeaning exuberance

of partial esteem, nor the flattering encomium of prostituted eloquence: many of you, my hearers, would resent any cold-hearted insinuations, that offered insult to the memory of the generous friend, the warm patroness of the poor. Your bowels have often been cheered, your necessities supplied, your miseries alleviated, your disorders relieved, your cold limbs warmed, and your afflicted hearts comforted by her kindness. You widows that stand weeping round the remains of your beloved benefactress, can shew the coats and garments which she made while she was yet with you. Her bounty was not a casual summer torrent, which attracts attention more by its novelty than its utility, suddenly emitted and as suddenly exhausted; it was a perennial stream from the fountain of life, flowing calm, steady, and diffusive to the end of her days. Her liberal heart was accustomed to devise liberal things, and so conscientious was her attention to this favorite duty, that I am confident she often hesitated and omitted to gratify herself in articles, which her situation might have justified, when she thought the wants of others preferred a juster claim. Ostentation never sullied her bounty, and if she was ever severe, it was in a scrupulous attention to the rectitude of her motives. She recommended benevolence to others, disdaining every method to exhibit her own, but what its active and extended influence rendered unavoidable. Her light shone before men, and her good works were glorifying to God.

From early life she was inured to affliction in her person, or in her intimate connexions: but the mild radiance of gospel truth, the exceedingly great and precious promises of God, a firm reliance on his supporting arm and

immutable affection, and the animating hope of heaven, moderated her sorrows, and made her yoke easy, and her burthen light. It is fourteen years since she gave her hand to our now afflicted and mourning Friend. She had previously felt the pangs of separation, in the loss of a fond mother; and in a few years after her marriage, she mourned with many now present, over an indulgent father. Her first and principal concern was, that the successive losses sustained by the cause of religion, and by the numerous poor in this neighbourhood, on the removal of those worthy characters, should be felt as lightly as possible. Nor was it felt severely; her prompt and kind assiduities soon supplied and enlarged their sphere of active benevolence. It was her felicity to have cemented the most endearing union with a fellow-heir of the grace of life, and they have proved themselves helpers of each others joy, provoking each other to love and good works. During the last winter, she was, with a constitution greatly enfeebled, attacked in the tenderest part, by the alarming illness of her husband: Heaven in great mercy heard the voice of prayer, and rebuked the disease: he was, however, but partially restored to health, when a lovely child was snatched from their embraces; and in aggravation of their affliction, almost every individual of their numerous family was in succession confined by illness. Through this distressing scene she passed with a thousand anxieties, but with great composure; she was calm and resigned amidst the storm, her confidence reposing on that gracious assurance, "the mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed, but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither shall the covenant of my peace be removed, saith the Lord, that hath mercy on thee." From hence

she derived comfort, and frequently referred to it, as the ground of her hope, and the source of her consolation. But her debilitated frame was gradually declining, and the reiterated shocks it had sustained, though productive of no immediate and obvious effect, assisted imperceptibly to undermine it. Her mind was solemnized by a succession of trials, and she looked forward to a happier state. In a letter written to a dear friend, on the 15th of March, she says, "I want to be enabled more to realize the blissful period, when mortality shall be swallowed up of life; I have had more comfortable views of eternity lately, than I think I ever had before, and I trust and believe, as we draw nearer the gloomy valley, our hopes will brighten, and that we shall not only have hope, but a good hope through grace." These sentiments illustrate the prevalent direction of her mind, which continued until her disorder became too violent for expressing her feelings or her hopes. About three weeks since she was rendered incapable of quitting her chamber, and after a few days confinement there, the connexion between body and mind was too much interrupted to admit of that solemn and edifying intercourse, so desirable and so impressive in the near approach of dissolution. Broken and incomplete sentences frequently indicated the tranquillity and the comfort she enjoyed; and when no longer capable of articulation, she appeared to be engaged in devotional addresses to her heavenly Friend and Father.

On Friday last the painful conflict ended, and there, inclosed in that coffin lies the perishable part of our worthy, our useful, our pious, and benevolent Friend! The event is very afflicting; every heart present feels more or less

the sharp arrows of the Almighty: yet hope, sweet hope, descends to allay the intemperance of grief; to extract the sting of death, and to illumine with a ray of glory, these remains of frail mortality. Farewell, happy spirit! Released from every sorrow, she is elevated to the bowers of bliss, and joining in the songs of Heaven. We are left to mourn our loss, and ere long, to follow the departed Saint. May we emulate her piety, her friendship, her benevolence! That when the awful, the decisive summons shall arrive, we may be prepared to quit this scene of guilt and misery, and to greet our blest associate in a state of inseparable and immortal friendship.

My kind and afflicted Friend! your trial is severe, and your sorrow is just: your loss is, and will be, very sensibly felt; you best knew her worth, and will most keenly deplore the disparting stroke. But when your mind is overwhelmed with bitter and distracting reflections, look to the Rock of your salvation; direct your streaming eyes to the throne of mercy; where infinite love extends its arms to embrace you, inviting you to repose your burdened spirit in the bosom of your God, and assuring you that "these momentary afflictions shall work out for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Though the loud waves impetuous round you rise, Yonder's the haven, there your portion lies: He that has lov'd you, guides you through the storm, Will every promise of his grace perform. O! Heal all your sorrows, bid you sigh no more, And land you safely on the peaceful shore.

You feel, my Friend, a dreadful chasm in your domestic felicity; you are looking around with inquisitive anxiety for the object of your love and delight, and a thousand circumstances incessantly remind you of your past enjoyment, and your present loss: but you are not deprived of all; conjugal love, disappointment in its researches, will coalesce with paternal affection, and with combined energy attach itself to the dear pledges of a union once so happy. Your blooming offspring will claim and multiply your assiduous attentions; the departed Saint has sown the seeds of religion and virtue in their tender hearts; and it will be your pleasing employ to promote their growth, and foster them up to maturity. May your children be preserved for the comfort of your advancing age, and inheriting their mother's spirit and principles, be hereafter the means of advancing the present welfare and eternal happiness of all around them! The common duties of your station, and the obligations of Religion, Friendship, and Benevolence, will continue to occupy your attention, assist to alleviate your distress, and gradually bring you to the end of your race; when quitting this house of woe, you shall join your absent associate in a world of perfect felicity, where there shall be no more sorrow, nor sighing, nor death.

You, my revered and aged Sister, who, from the first dawn of her existence to the last painful period of her life, were the assistant, the friend, the confidant of the amiable Saint! You have travelled long in the wilderness, you have suffered much, and have passed through many trying scenes; you now feel acutely the pangs of

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separation, from one who was interested in all your sorrows, and exerted every effort which the truest love could suggest to increase your joys. But recall your past and timely supports, which a faithful God has afforded you. You have found his grace always sufficient. Hold fast your confidence, rely with steadfast faith on the fidelity of your God, nor doubt but that ere long, all your hopes shall be realized, all your wishes gratified, and that you shall be advanced to the general assembly, the church of the first-born, and with unutterable delight salute your lost connexions there.

You, the more distant relatives, friends, and admirers of the dear deceased! If you loved her for her excellencies, endeavor to imitate them: if you regret the loss sustained by her removal, try to supply it by the increased energy of well-directed benevolence. By making her your example, you may extend more widely the blessings of religion and generous goodness; and whilst promoting the welfare of others, you will be securing your own, and giving the best proof of your regard to her memory. A difference of circumstances will be no excuse for concealing talents, or suppressing the impulse of a holy and liberal principle: where the spirit of Christ resides it will be operative; and its genuine and habitual efforts will be crowned with his approbation, who went about doing good, leaving us an example that we should follow his steps.

Brethren and Friends, who form the Congregation assembling in this place! An appropriate address to you is the chosen department of your worthy Pastor, on the

ensuing Sabbath. His warm attachment to your deceased member, and his solicitude to advance your eternal interests, will peculiarly qualify him for improving the solemn event, and speaking to you a word in season.

Now let our serious attention be directed to that open grave, and whilst depositing there the remains of our much-loved Friend and Sister, may we learn effectually like her to live, like her to die! May I live the life of the righteous, and may I last and be like her! Amen.

Not long since, some of us with the tokens of mourning, attended to this vault the remains of a lovely child; and connecting them with the afflictive circumstances of the amiable family, we felt it an arduous task. But the great Disposer of all events, has now inflicted a severer stroke; he has removed the affectionate Wife, the tender Mother, the sincere Friend, and the valuable Member of religious and civil Society: and we are called, with deeper grief than on the former occasion, to deposit her mortal part in the House appointed for all living. "What is our life? It is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away." No many distinction in circumstances can secure, nor the most fervent and numerous wishes, could either of these have availed, our Friend had not died. The great Author of life, when it seemeth good in his sight, carrieth away those who are most dear to us, as

THE ADDRESS

DELIVERED AT THE INTERMENT.

ANOTHER bereaving providence has caused this silent tomb to be opened, which has been repeatedly made the receptacle of those, who in life were eminently good, useful, and engaging.

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with a flood; "they are as a sleep: In the morning they
 "are like grass which groweth up, in the evening it is
 "cut down and withereth away."

Though He, whose years are throughout all generations, has taken away our beloved sister in the midst of her days, yet that life which is rendered comparatively short, has not been in vain. God her Saviour disposed her from an early period to cry unto him, "my Father, "thou art the guide of my youth." He enabled her to live well, and habitually under the impression of that salutary admonition, "the night cometh when no man "can work."

To allude to the excellencies of her character and extensive usefulness is sufficient; they are well known; nor need I enlarge the description, which our brother has with so much feeling already given you. She was averse from the least degree of ostentation, and took most delight in doing good under the veil of secrecy. Hence, though many of her daily liberal distributions and amiable qualities could not be hidden, we shall acquire a growing knowledge of her worth in the sad experience of our loss.

No more will she perform the tender duties of relative life: no more afford to her extensive acquaintance, pleasure and profit by her presence and her converse; nor impart the wholesome counsels of friendship to those who have sought them, and who always found her easy of access. No more will she fill her place in the house of

God with fervent devotion. No more with a generous heart and a bountiful hand, administer relief to the fatherless, the widow and the needy of every class.

This life of meekness, faith, and love, and full of good works, has been attended with various and multiplied sufferings: this state proved indeed to her a vale of tears: frequent occurrences taught her that man is born to trouble, and that this was not her rest. But that stroke which put a period to her pleasing intercourse with, and beneficial exertions among us, has likewise released her from every affliction: and may not this thought abate a little that regret, which we feel on account of her early and sudden departure? Says the divine John, "I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors." The change doubtless to her is immortal gain. It may be said without hesitation or flattery, that she was well prepared to go. She was contrite in spirit before God, under the conviction of being a transgressor in heart, though less so in conduct than most are. While abounding in good works, she was far from depending upon them. She knew and prized the Saviour's atoning blood and perfect righteousness, and on them relied for pardon and eternal life: hence when she was almost speechless, these words dropped from her lips, "Christ is precious." She was ever sensible that without the Lord's assistance she could do nothing, but through his strengthening her, she was ready to do all things. She brought forth fruit meet for repentance, and her faith was manifested by her holy conversation. As one that feared the Lord she hated all

evil; as one who loved him, she kept his commandments, in all things adorning the doctrine of God her Saviour; whose cause she sincerely esteemed and laboured to promote, being united in spirit with all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. All blessings she expected from the riches of his goodness, continually acknowledging "by the grace of God I am what I am;" and had not her prevailing modesty prevented, might have added "his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain."

Fitted so abundantly to depart, her Lord having led the way and smoothed the passage, her immortal spirit is gone to mansions in the skies, is entered into the joys of paradise, and has joined not only the spirits of departed kindred, but also the general assembly and church of the first-born.

Here remains the inactive body, to moulder into dust, but not to abide in that state. "I know (saith Job) that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes behold, and not another." Jesus has said, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth on me though he were dead, yet shall he live, for I will raise him up at the last day." "Behold (saith the Apostle) I shew you a mystery; we shall not all sleep but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put

"on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality." These hopes and delightful prospects demand our praises to him, "Who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to life through the Gospel;" for without hopes and prospects like these, how awful death, how gloomy the grave would appear!

Should not these considerations moderate our sorrow, and render more calm our disturbed minds? especially those of the bereaved relatives? You feel, we know, this heavy stroke; and while we sympathize with you, only the "Father of mercies who comforteth them that are cast down," can comfort and sustain you. Remember, the Lord is good, "a strong hold in the day of trouble, and knoweth them that put their trust in him." It is a sovereign, righteous, and gracious God, who hath made this separation: may you be helped to say submissively, "Father thy will be done;" and in the lively exercise of faith, "though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Recollect that though you must bury one greatly and deservedly beloved, yet you will not bury your knowledge of her in the present state, nor your hopes respecting her in the future. Be ye followers of her who through faith and patience, inherits the promises, and you will not only behold her again, but participate of her uninterrupted bliss.

Let us not confine our views to the case of the deceased or bereaved only. We too must die, and methinks could she who is gone address you, she would say, "Weep not for me, but for yourselves and your children." With

the greatest firmness of mind, and in the most energetic language, she would enforce upon us, the necessity of choosing the better part, and seeking first the kingdom of God. If we profess to admire and esteem her past manners of life, we cannot manifest that we do so in any way that would have been so grateful to her, as by continuing or beginning to revere and love her God, to embrace by faith her Saviour, to make the word of God, which was her daily companion, ours; to frequent the throne of grace, her habitual employ; to hate sin, which in every form met with her decided disapprobation, and to take pleasure in that divine worship, religious service, and holy walk, which to her were always delightful.

Not any thing beneath the skies, can answer the end of true godliness, "which is profitable to all things, having promise of the life which now is, and of that which is to come." All earthly enjoyments are insufficient for the immortal mind, are liable to change, and must be left as you are strikingly taught from this instance before you. "This I say then, the time is short, it remaineth that they that have wives be as though they had none, and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as though they rejoiced not; and they that buy, as though they possessed not; and they that use this world, as not abusing it; for the fashion of this world passeth away."

In what state are you now, my fellow mortals, in regard to death? What preparation have you made for a

change of worlds? Permit me to recommend the inquiries to be taken under the most serious consideration, to intreat you to give the closest attention to your best interests and everlasting welfare. Suffer not yourself to be mistaken respecting, nor to treat with carelessness or contempt, objects of such vast importance. Take up with prayer, the Bible, that tells you, "all have sinned." That except a man is born again of the spirit, "he cannot enter the kingdom of God." That except ye repent ye must perish. That he who believeth on the "Son hath everlasting life, and that he who believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him. That if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." It says, "Woe to the wicked for it shall go ill with him;" and that "without holiness no man shall see the Lord." "O that ye were wise, that ye would consider your latter end, and prepare to meet your God! In the midst of life we are in death. We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ. And if the righteous scarcely be saved; that is, through many difficulties and not without many afflictions, "where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?"

Happy those who are meetened for the event of death, and the solemnity of judgment, as we trust that this our Sister was! And be assured, that only the same free and abundant grace of God through Jesus Christ, which rendered her so, can make you. For your encouragement to seek this, it is said, "The Lord is plenteous in mercy, to

who call upon him." And he who died to save hath
 "him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast
 out."

Now we must take a sad and final leave on earth, of that
 dear follower of Christ, who in all things has been so
 highly worthy of our esteem and emulation: and O may
 we, without delay or cessation, be solicitous to meet her
 in that blessed society, where there cannot be any separation,
 in the presence of God, where there is fullness of
 joy, and at his right hand, where there are pleasures for
 evermore!



And he who calls us to follow him
will be with us in our journey.

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Now we must take a final leave of this
earthly home, and all things have been to
highly worthy of our effort and emulation: and O may
we, without delay or call, be followers to meet him
in his blissful home, where there is no parting.
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